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ENG 2205-001: Introduction to Literary Studies

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Introduction to Literary Studies

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Class web site:
<http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfarv/2205.html>

Office hours:
MWF 9-10:30 AND BY APPOINTMENT
(You can make an appointment by seeing me
before or after class OR by signing up on the
appointment schedule on my office door.)

Course Objectives

How do serious students of literature think and write about literature? Why do we work in the ways we do? Those are the major questions we will investigate in this course. Our objectives in the course can be divided into the *hows* and *whys* of literary study.

The Hows of Literary Study

By the end of the course, you should be able to read a new piece of literature and do the following: (1) identify and independently find answers to factual questions that arise as you read; (2) identify significant questions about the text that could lead to interesting discussion or research; (3) situate the text in appropriate literary, historical, and cultural contexts; (4) write about the literary work in ways that add to our understanding of the text, drawing on close reading, theoretical analysis, and/or research you've conducted. You should also be able to use some very specific research tools and techniques: (a) the online MLA bibliography; (b) the Oxford English Dictionary; (c) Early English Books Online; (d) MLA documentation style.

The Whys of Literary Study

By the end of the course, you should also be able to describe a variety of major approaches to literary study and to explain the goals of those approaches as well as the values and assumptions that underlay them. When you read a scholarly article on literature, you should be able to identify the approach or approaches taken in the analysis. You should also be able to speculate in an informed way about how a critic taking a particular approach might analyze a work of literature (even if you don't like that particular approach yourself). When you write about literature, you should be aware of the approaches you're drawing on as you make your analysis.

What's in it for you?

What can you expect to get out of this class? In the present and the near future, your work on learning about the *hows* of literary study should be useful to you in all your other literature courses. Our focus on the *whys* will benefit you in different ways depending on your reasons for majoring in English. Creative writers should find that literary criticism and theory gives them new ways to think about their own writing. High school English teachers should, of course, have a good idea of *why* literature is worth studying and the many different ways in which that study is approached. If you're majoring in English with other goals in mind—law school or graduate school in English, for example—the analytic skills we work on as we analyze “why” will be a big payoff in themselves.

Texts to be issued by TRS

Bronte, *Wuthering Heights: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*
Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook*
Pynchon, *Crying of Lot 49*
Richter, ed., *Falling into Theory*
Shakespeare, *Hamlet: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*
Woolf, *The Voyage Out*

Additional materials will be supplied by the instructor.

What will we be doing in this course?

Detailed reading schedules will be distributed at the beginning of each major section of the course (about once a month). Following are deadlines and other notable dates in our schedule:

M Sept 4—No class (Labor Day observed)
F Sept 29—Essay 1 due
F Oct 6—Mid-term exam
F Oct 13—No class (Fall Break)
F Nov 3—Essay 2 due
Nov. 20-24—No class (Thanksgiving)
M Dec 4—Essay portfolio due;
Take-home portion of final exam distributed
R Dec 14, 8-10 a.m.—Final exam

In general, here's what you can expect if you decide to commit to this class. We will **read** a lot, in three categories: (a) literary texts (stories, poems, novels, plays, essays); (b) literary criticism (essays about literary texts); (c) literary theory (essays about the hows and whys of literary study). Our reading will spur our writing and discussion.

We will also **write** a lot, including formal essays (two of them), written homework, and in-class writing assignments. Writing assignments will take a wide variety of forms, since there are a large number of skills this course should help you develop.

Finally, we will **talk** a lot, including general discussions and more structured exercises, like debates, staged readings, and brief research presentations. Make no mistake—the quality of your talk is as important to your success in this class as the quality of your reading and writing.

Assignments and Grading

Homework/In-class writings	30%
Participation	10%
Essays (15% each)	30%
Mid-Term and Final Exams	30% (final includes a take-home portion)

Final Grades

A	90% or above
B	80% to 89%
C	70% to 79%
D	60% to 69%
F	59% or below

Homework and in-class writings will be worth variable numbers of points. At the end of the semester, I will total the points available and divide your total by the total available to determine your homework/in-class writing grade. If you miss class, homework that was due for the class you missed is due the day you return to class. In-class writings may also be made up; see me to arrange for that when you return to class.

Participation in class discussion and other activities is critical to your learning. You don't have to be Socrates to make a meaningful contribution to a discussion. All I ask is that you make a good faith effort to take part in discussion and activities. Show up regularly (just about every day) and make an effort and you'll receive full credit here.

Attendance. When you miss class, you disadvantage both yourself and your classmates. However, coming to class is your decision. The only days when you need to provide me with documentation if you miss class are the days of the mid-term and final exams. However, you should note the following: (a) It's your job to find out, from me or a classmate or the class web site, what you've missed and make that work up. (b) Missing a lot of class will inevitably hurt your participation grade. (c) When you're turning something in late, turn it in during class or in my office hours. (Please don't email me assignments.)

Exams. The mid-term and final exams will both be comprehensive (that is, they will evaluate your progress toward meeting the overall goals of the course). So you can think of the mid-term as practice for the final. If you work steadily throughout the semester, then, you should do better on the final than on the mid-term. In that case, your final exam grade will be doubled and take the place of your mid-term exam grade.

Essays. Your essays will be graded as a portfolio, including three parts: two essays (due originally on Sept. 29 and Nov. 3) and an analysis of these two essays written at the end of the semester (due on Dec. 4). *You must meet all three deadlines in order to receive credit for both essays.* I will give you commentary and a tentative grade on each essay when they are originally submitted, but your final grade for the essays will not be assigned until you submit your analysis of the two essays. Like the final exam, the goal here is to evaluate your achievement over the course of the entire semester.

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Electronic Writing Portfolio

This course is writing intensive. If you are not a senior, that means you may use an essay from this class for your electronic writing portfolio. I will require that you submit a completed EWP form with your essay portfolio, and I will return that form with your graded essays at our final exam. You are not required to submit one of these papers, but if you wish to do so you will have the signed form that you need, so there will be no need to come and find me next semester. *If you need to make an EWP submission earlier than the end of this semester, just let me know.*

The English Department's Statement on Plagiarism

"Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

My Statement on Plagiarism

I assume that, as an English major, you have contempt for the idea of plagiarizing someone else's writing. On the other hand, I've been given plagiarized work even by English majors. *If you're tempted to plagiarize due to time constraints or other pressures, ask me for an extension instead. If you have any doubts in your mind about whether your use of sources is okay, ask me ahead of time.*

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Schedule of Reading and Assignments

Notes:

1. Due dates in this schedule supercede those on original policy sheet.
2. Schedule is subject to change. Additional readings may be assigned.
3. Specific readings listed must be completed before the date listed.
4. Homework assignments will continue to be given in class; most are not listed in the schedule.

M Aug 21	Introduction to course
W Aug 23	Self-assessment due
F Aug 25	Discussion: Why we read (Graff and Vendler)
	FORMALISM AND HISTORICISM, PART I
M Aug 28	Collection of short stories (distributed by instructor); introduction to formalist ("close reading") methods as applied to fiction. Bring <i>Wuthering Heights</i> to class next time.
W Aug 30	Introduction to <i>Wuthering Heights</i>
F Sept 1	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> chs. 1-5
M Sept 4	Labor Day Observed—no class
W Sept 6	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> chs. 6-11
F Sept 8	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> chs. 12-17
M Sept 11	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> chs. 18-24
W Sept 13	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> chs. 25-34
	CULTURAL CRITICISM I
F Sept 15	Reading: Stories to be distributed by instructor. Intro to cultural criticism.
M Sept 18	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> , pp. 430-450. Discussion of cultural criticism.
	PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM I
W Sept 20	Reading: Stories to be distributed by instructor. Intro to psychoanalytic criticism.
F Sept 22	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> , pp. 364-378. Discussion of psychoanalytic criticism.
	FEMINIST CRITICISM I
M Sept 25	Reading: Stories to be distributed by instructor. Intro to feminist criticism.
W Sept 27	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> , pp. 468-477. Discussion of feminist criticism.
	WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE I
F Sept 29	Developing a thesis; finding evidence; documentation & MLA style
M Oct 2	Engaging a critical conversation
W Oct 4	Review for mid-term exam
F Oct 6	Mid-term exam

	FORMALISM AND HISTORICISM, PART II
M Oct 9	Essay One due Introduction to formalist and historicist methods of reading poetry
W Oct 11	Readings to be provided by instructor
F Oct 13	Fall Break—no class
M Oct 16	Readings to be provided by instructor
W Oct 18	Readings to be provided by instructor
	CULTURAL CRITICISM, PART II
F Oct 20	Readings to be provided by instructor
M Oct 23	Readings to be provided by instructor
	PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM, PART II
W Oct 25	Readings to be provided by instructor
F Oct 27	No class
M Oct 30	Readings to be provided by instructor
	FEMINIST CRITICISM, PART II
W Nov 1	Readings to be provided by instructor
F Nov 3	Readings to be provided by instructor
	WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE, PART II
M Nov 6	Readings to be provided by instructor
W Nov 8	Readings to be provided by instructor
F Nov 10	Essay Two due ; bring <i>Hamlet</i> to class
M Nov 13	<i>Hamlet</i> (reading and/or viewing TBA)
W Nov 15	<i>Hamlet</i> (reading and/or viewing TBA)
F Nov 17	<i>Hamlet</i> (reading and/or viewing TBA)
Nov. 20-24	Thanksgiving Break
	READING METHODS REPRISE
M Nov 27	<i>Hamlet</i> (critical reading TBA)
W Nov 29	<i>Hamlet</i> (critical reading TBA)
F Dec 1	<i>Hamlet</i> (critical reading TBA)
	WHY WE READ REPRISE
M Dec 4	Essay portfolio due; take-home portion of final exam distributed in class
W Dec 6	Reading TBA
F Dec 8	Course conclusion
R Dec 14 8-10 a.m.	Final exam